FEAR THE DARK

Nostalgic Dungeon Crawl

ORCS AND GOBLINS

issue 1 † the first quests

INTRODUCTION

You should have your HeroQuest box ready at hand, to begin the game. Then you can read the following text aloud to the players.

The Empire is powerful and the Emperor rules the land with supreme wisdom and an iron fist. Everyone, within the borders of the Empire, may sleep well at night, for the terrors of the dark forces of Chaos are just a memory of the past. In the Empire, everyone prospers: you just have to obey, in exchange for safety. You may live a long and boring life, if that suits you, and the Emperor's Inquisition doesn't suspect you of some heresy.
But this is not the life for the likes of you.
A strong barbarian with an appetite for gold and glory.
A stubborn dwarf seeking oddities and treasures.
A curious elf from the ancient fallen kingdom of the fables.
A smart wizard in search of more power and lost magic.

Beyond the borders of the Empire, the land is full of peril and opportunities. Ancient necropolis of long gone civilizations, tombs of kings whose memory turned to dust, ruins of temples of forgotten gods; you just have to summon the courage to face the monsters and horrors within, to emerge with a treasure. Deep underground labyrinth have turned into lairs of orcs and goblins, crumbled fortresses and towers host mad wizards and alchemists, endless dungeons hide the nests of Chaos forces brooding their plans to subvert the peace of the human kingdoms. With the proper companions, you feel strong enough to venture there and return stronger, wiser, and richer.

FEAR the Dark is a fanzine dedicated to HeroQuest - the popular fantasy board game of the 90s which introduced so many of us to dungeon crawling and miniatures.
This is going to be a complete reboot of the game's background and story. It will remain faithful to the original material but it aims to bring a different feeling to it, so that there will be no overlapping with the stories of Mentor, Morcar and Zargon. Moreover, the 'zine will contain new quests which can be played by any group of players. Old players will find new maps and new missions, and new players will be allowed to start from zero.
Everything presented in this fanzine is written to be played starting with this issue, and will slowly expand beyond the original box and miniatures. It will also attempt to provide a modular system; it keeps the traditional rules and will progressively add little, indipendent pieces to them. You will be able to use all those rules, or just some of them.

Materials

This first issue is based on the original game and materials, but future issues may expand their scope. My purpose is to breathe new life into that old HeroQuest box and not to make you spend tons of money, so I will make a point of producing material which will be playable with HeroQuest as it is, without the need for additional purchases.
In the next issues, new material will be introduced, but it should be something easy to come by or that you can print at home (such as character sheets, rules, equipment and artifacts, rooms and furniture, etc.) , or that you may already own (miniatures, basically, from various brands).

Heroes or Adventurers

In this fanzine you will find the term "heroes", since this is how characters were called in HeroQuest. Future issues, though, will move away from this concept.
FEAR the DARK is built around the concept of dungeon crawling and treasure seeking - your "heroes" won't be that anymore, but will instead be "adventurers".
The game will be based on exploration, low survival rate, and harsh, weird, dungeons.
Adventures will be a challenge, a deadly affair.

Spirit

To play FEAR the Dark you should try to gather your old group of friends from the good old days. This is not a rule, but a suggestion. Even if it seems unlikely to be able to do that, try anyway. If you fail, find new players nearby. Meet every week or every two; meet once a month. Play face to face, not online.

Credits

HeroQuest is still a Hasbro and Milton Bradley trademark, in terms of the game, while the name itself is a Moon Design Publications trademark. This fanzine claims no ownership of the aforementioned trademarks, and is instead a personal project made available to the public as a tribute to the game.
Maps are made using the HeroQuest-Excel-Quest-Creator tool.
The cover image is picture of an HeroQuest game, and on the backcover are some painted monsters; coming back to painting minis is hard, but satisfying.

Summary of the Original Rules

This is a summary of the original rules; after a couple of quests we will progressively introduce new rules and features to the game.

TURN

Default order: Barbarian, Dwarf, Elf, Wizard, Game Master (GM).

Movement and Action

In a turn, you may move and then act, or act and then move. You cannot make an action in the middle of a movement. Actions are:

† Attack
† Cast a spell
† Search for treasure
† Search for secret doors
† Search for traps
† Disarm a trap

Looking

Looking is **not** one of the basic actions. It happens automatically as heroes move. Everything in their **line of sight** must be placed on the board.

Doors

If a hero stops next to a closed door, they can ask the GM to open it, and place on the board the content of the room. Opening doors does **not** count as an action; it's a part of the normal movement. Open doors **cannot** be closed.

Movement rules

A hero can move less of the 2d6 roll, and pass other heroes if allowed by the other player. It is **not allowed** to move diagonally, through walls, through blocked squares (walls), over adversaries, or backwards in the same turn. It is **not allowed** to end a move sharing a square (exception: this is allowed on stairs and in pits).

ATTACK

You may attack an adjacent enemy, **not** diagonally. Some weapons allow to attack from a distance or diagonally, or change the number of dice to roll. An attack scores **one hit** for every Skull rolled. One attack per Turn is allowed.

Defend

The defendant rolls its Defend dice, and blocks one hit for every **white shield** if it's a hero defending, or for every **black shield** if it's a monster defending. Roll the Defend dice every time someone attacks you.

Body Points

Every hit not blocked, is subtracted from the Body points. When they reach **zero**, the hero or monster is **dead** (a hero may drink a potion already in their possession or use a healing spell if they have not already made an action).

Cast a Spell

A spell requires a **visible** target. After casting the spell, **discard** the spell card and the same spell cannot be used until the next quest. The line of sight is **blocked** by walls, closed doors, and other miniatures (heroes or monsters).

Search for treasure

Treasures are **only in rooms**, not in corridors. Every hero may search independently on their turn, and only once by each hero for each room. You may search for treasure only when the room is **empty** of enemies.

Treasure deck

If there is no special treasure declared by the Quest Book, shuffle the Treasure deck and draw a random Treasure card. Valuable treasure cards remain in possession of the hero, while other cards are returned to the deck.

Wandering monster

Place it next to the searcher, and attack immediately. From the next turn, the monster moves and attacks normally. If there is no space, place it anywhere in the room, without making an attack.

Search for secret doors

Secret doors may be **in rooms or corridors**. Every hero may search independently on their turn, in the room or corridor they're in. You may search for secret doors only when the room or corridor is **empty** of enemies. No need to search more than once: **all** secret doors in the room or corridor are revealed as soon as the first hero searches for them. Secret doors are **closed** until a hero opens them, and work as normal doors.

Search for traps

Traps may be in **rooms, corridors, or chests/furniture**. You may search for traps only when the room or corridor is **empty** of enemies. If there are traps, the GM will tell you what they are and where they are.

Trigger a trap

If a hero moves on a trap square, without checking, the trap is triggered. If a hero searches for treasures, without checking, the chest/furniture trap is triggered. Monsters do not trigger hidden traps.

Disarm a trap

To disarm a trap you must possess the **appropriate tool kit**; the Dwarf on the other hand may do this even without tools. A hero must announce the attempt and move to the trap square, then roll 1 Combat die. If you roll a Skull, you trigger the trap and suffer its consequences; any other roll means you disarmed the trap and it's gone forever. The Dwarf fails and triggers the trap only when rolling a black shield.

Traps rules

Here is the list of the default traps, how they can be avoided or disarmed, and what happens if they are triggered by the heroes.

Pit traps

This is declared as a weak floor by the GM, and may be **jumped or disarmed**. If triggered, suffer 1 Body point damage and fall into the pit, ending your turn; place a **pit trap tile** on the board, which cannot be removed. The pit may only be jumped at this point. **In the pit**, a hero may search for treasure or secret doors as if in a room. Attack and Defend rolls are done with one die less (but not less than one, and this applies also to monsters). A hero or monster may move out of the pit in the next turn.

Falling Block trap

This is declared as a dangerous looking ceiling by the GM, and may be **jumped or disarmed**. If triggered, roll 3 attack dice and inflict 1 Body point of damage on each Skull; the **falling block tile** is placed on the board and becomes a permanent block which cannot be removed. The hero must decide in which direction to make a last step (ahead or back), before the turn ends.

Spear trap

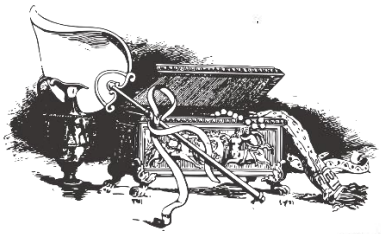
This is declared as suspicious by the GM, and may be **jumped or disarmed**. If triggered, roll 1 attack die and inflict 1 Body point of damage on a Skull. This ends the hero turn. When triggered once, a spear trap is gone and nothing is placed on the board.

Chest/Furniture trap

This is declared as looking suspicious by the GM, and may be **disarmed**. It is also avoided by not searching for treasures. If disarmed, it is possible to look for treasures without triggering traps. If triggered, follow its instructions.

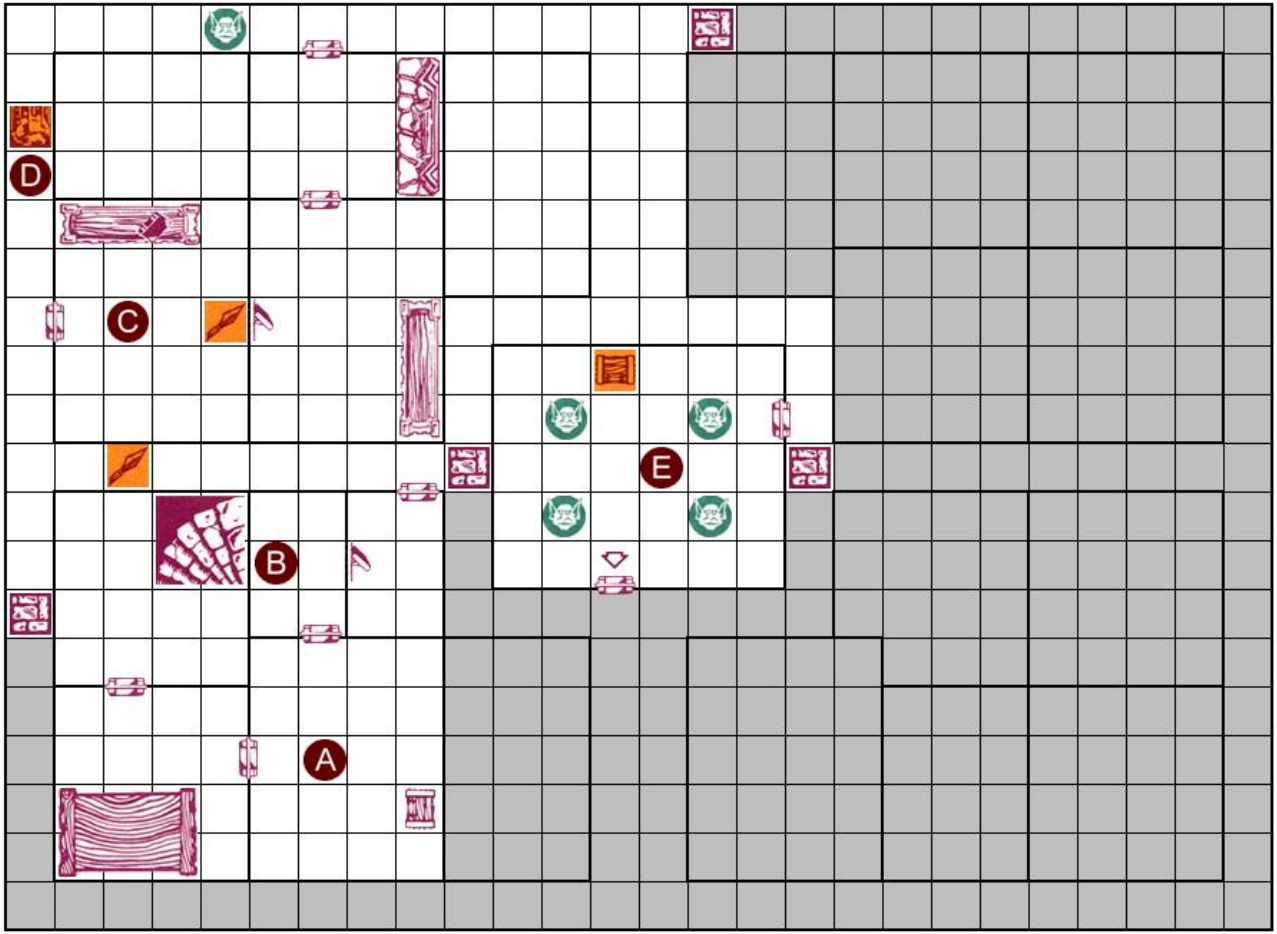
Jump a trap or a pit

You may jump traps which have not been triggered, or may jump an open pit. You cannot jump over a fallen block: this is like a blocking wall. To jump, you must have enough movement left to end in the square after the trap; if you do, roll 1 Combat die. If you roll a Skull, you trigger the trap (or fall into the pit) and suffer its consequences; any other roll means you avoided the trap or pit.



Your Rules

Use this space to make notes about your own rules, so that you have a written record for you and the players.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Quest Zero

A Small Dungeon

The barbarian has left his tribe behind, the dwarf brings with him the memory of his clan's ancient halls, the elf travelled far from his forest and the fallen kingdom of his kin, the wizard just made it out of his apprenticeship. You began traveling together and sharing the fire at night. Yesterday, you entered this nest of goblins but found nothing, and now the stairs back to the surface are blocked. You must find another exit, and perhaps some treasure worth of your time.

GM - When the quest begins, keep only the following treasures in the deck: 10 gold, 20 gold, 25 gold, nothing, one trap, two wandering monsters (the first will be a goblin, the next an orc). You may also place a Blocked tile on the stairs to show that this way is now blocked.

A The exit is locked, the key is found in the chest when searching for treasures in the room.

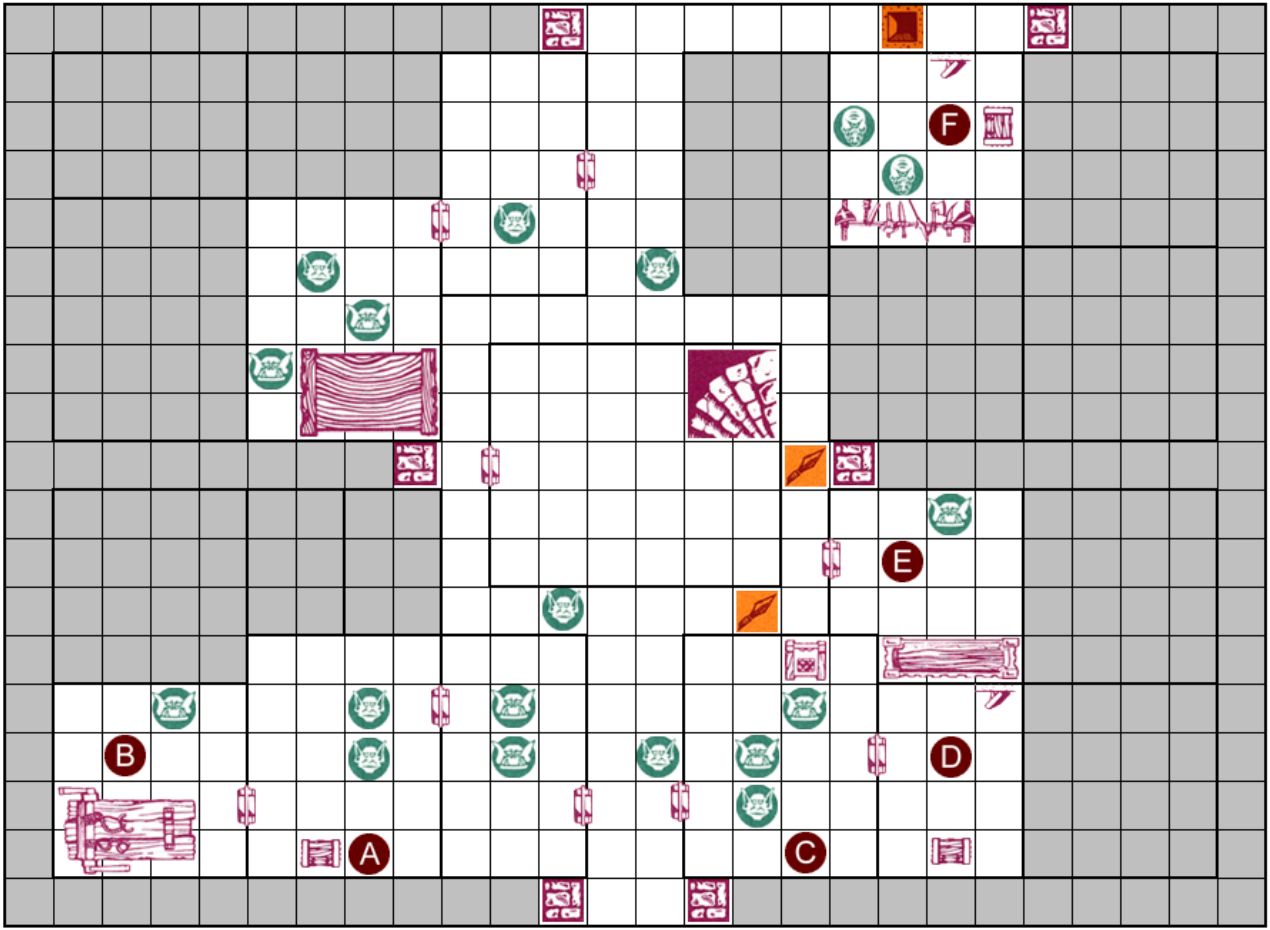
B The secret door is the only way out, found searching for secrets.

C The secret door is protected by a spear trap; it is found if traps are searched for before secrets. Otherwise it triggers when finding the secret door. The trap can be triggered once, or disarmed, to exit the room.

D The falling block may separate the heroes; they can join again following two different paths (one through the corridor, the other through the secret door).

E The chest is protected by a gas trap which inflicts 1 Body point damage to anyone in the room. In the chest is the key for the exit door marked by the arrow.

Wandering monster: first a Goblin, then an Orc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QUEST 1

Traders' Treasure

Traveling through the hills, you come by the remains of a traders' caravan. Among the broken carriages, some soldiers and a few merchants lay dead on the ground, as well as several orcs and goblins attackers. Following the tracks of the attackers is quite easy and here you are, at the entrance of an ancient underground structure, where the green creatures have made their nest. You are free to reclaim the traders' riches from the monsters, and you may as well find some survivors.

GM - if this is the first time for your players on an HeroQuest board, give them a few suggestions: be careful if you split the party, check for traps, do not hesitate to use spells or resources when needed. If you plan to play with a stable group of players, and someone dies in this quest, allow the other players to drag the body out of the dungeon, if they accept to return to the stairs without seeking other treasures. The "dead" hero will turn out to be just seriously wounded but will recover soon. Tell them this is the first and last time you will show mercy.

A The treasure chest contains only 10 gold coins.

B A merchant is kept prisoner here. If rescued, he will move with 1d6 and roll 2 Defend dice, but will not fight. He has 2 Body points. If he's escorted back to the stairs, he will add 100 coins to the reward of Quest 2.

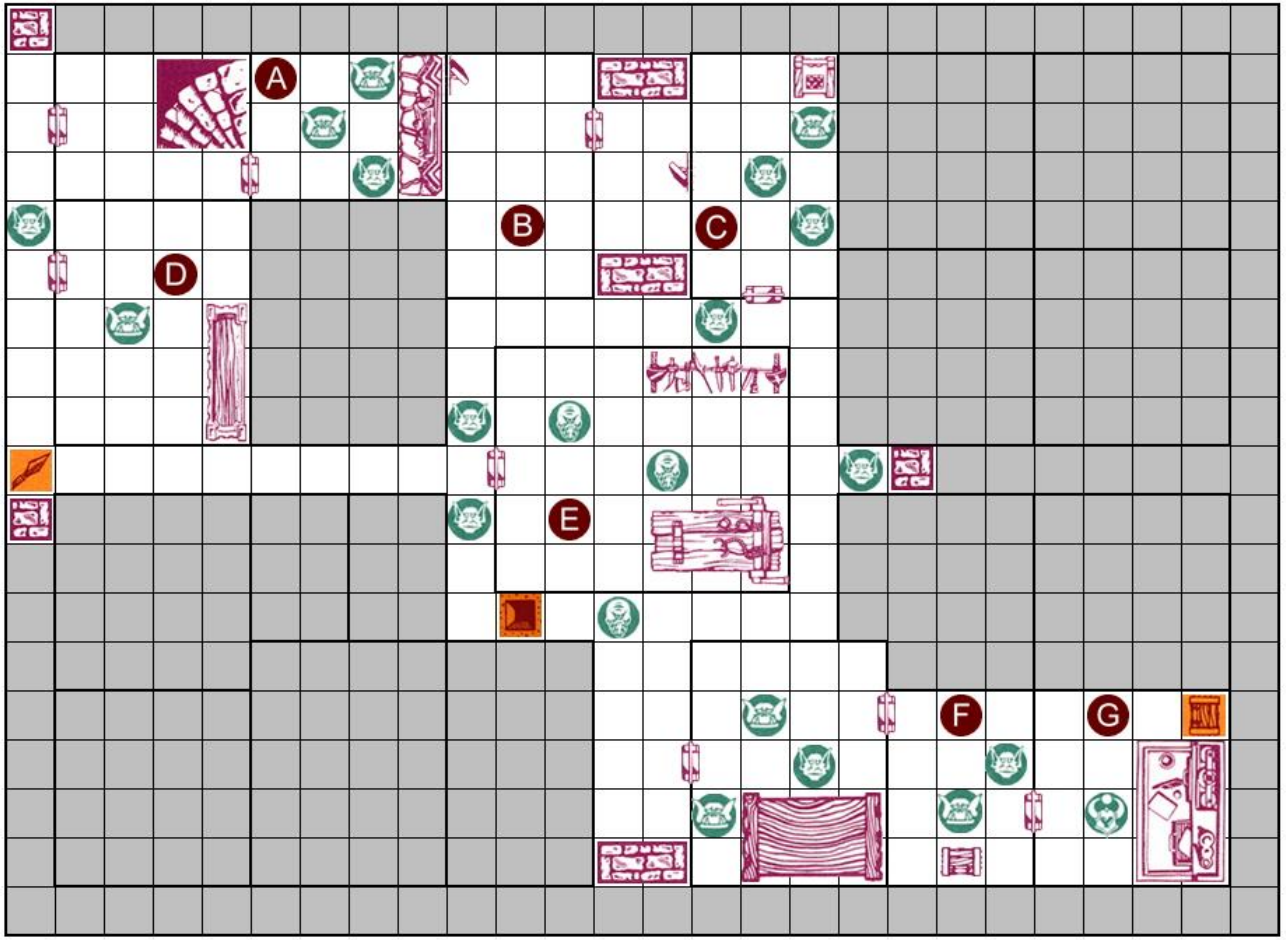
C The orc next to the throne is a champion and rolls 1 Attack die more.

D This chest contains 30 gold coins.

E If the heroes search for secret doors, they will find one behind the cupboard.

F These fimirs are locked to protect the orcs' treasure. The chest contains 120 gold coins. The weapons rack has only rusted, useless junk, except for a shield.

Wandering monster: Goblin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QUEST 2

Revenge Against the Orcs

The Merchants Guild has grown tired of orcs and goblins attacking their caravans, and has put a bounty on those vile creatures. Every goblin's head will be paid 10 gold coins, and 20 for every orc's one. Your group also had been given a map to the entrace of Uruk's lair; Uruk is the orc's leader which planned the last attack. The Merchants Guild will pay 100 coins for its head (and another 100 will be offered by the merchant which was saved in Quest 1, if he made it out alive with the heroes).

GM – ask the players to keep track of goblins and orcs killed. They can do it separately, or together as a group.

A There is a secret door leading to room B, revealed behind the fireplace.

B This room is empty; searching for treasure will reveal nothing.

C This room can be found searching for secret doors in the corridor, or coming from the normal door. This is Uruk, the orcs' leader, and attacks and defends with 1 die more.

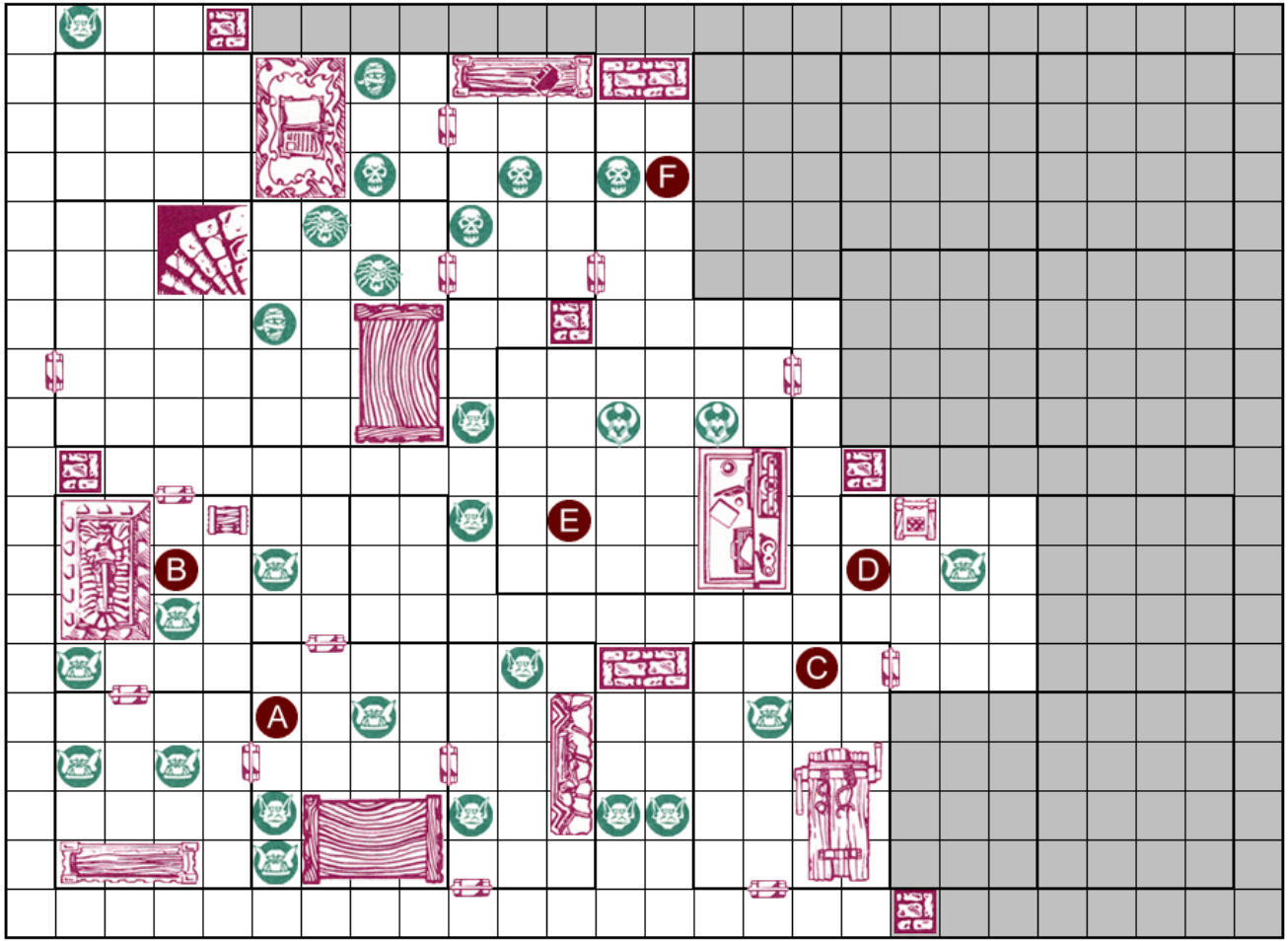
D Searching for treasure will reveal a few (2d6) gold coins in the cupboard.

E A dying wizard is kept prisoner here. If the heroes search for treasures they will find the wizard's staff on the weapons rack (the staff is as in the equipment cards). They will also find a note on the body with the location of his tower (to be used in another Quest).

F The chest contains 10 gold coins and a Potion of Resilience (plus 2 Defend dice on one roll).

G The Chaos warrior is working on the dying wizard's note (see room E). The chest contains a Potion of Strength (plus 2 Attack dice on one roll) but is protected by a poison needle trap which causes 2 Body points damage if not disarmed.

Wandering monster: Goblin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QUEST 3

The Orc's King Tomb

"There are rumors of a rich, wonderful treasure hidden in the ancient tomb of an Orc King. You enter the sacred mausoleum and find the stairs that lead down below, into the darkness. You expect to find Orcs and Goblins guarding the tomb of their ancient King, but you're ready to face the danger they pose, to get your hands on the precious Orc's Bane, the enchanted sword. The emissaries of the Emperor have offerred a 200 gold coins prize for the heroes returning the blade to safety."

GM – if the heroes return the Orc's Bane to the emissaries of the Emperor, they will be told that they have the gratitude of the Empire. The Orc's Bane will return in future quests, if the heroes don't just keep it. Otherwise the heroes may keep the Orc's Bane but give up on the 200 gold coins reward.

A The first hero who searches for treasure will find 20 gold coins under the table.

B The tomb contains the body of the Orc King but someone must have taken the precious Orc's Bane, which is missing. The chest contains 60 gold coins.

C Searching for treasures will reveal nothing.

D Searching for treasures will reveal a Potion of Healing under the throne (for up to 4 Body points).

Wandering monster: Orc

E Searching for treasures will reveal nothing, but the Orc's Bane is visible on the desk; what are the Chaos emissaries doing with orcs and goblins?

F As soon as an hero sees the skeleton, bring up the new rule "**Fear of the Undead**".
When placing an undead (skeleton, zombie, mummy) on the board, or a group of them, the GM rolls a combat die. If the GM rolls a skull, the undead(s) may move and attack now, before any other hero's action. Then the game resumes normally.

FEAR the Dark is a fanzine dedicated to HeroQuest - the popular fantasy board game of the 90s. It's a complete reboot of the game; faithful to the original rules but with a new feeling to it. The 'zine will contain new quests, suitable to new players and to veteran players as well.

The fanzine is hosted at www.daimongames.com/heroquest.
If you want to get in touch, write to davide.pignedoli@gmail.com.

Issue number 1 – September 2020:

† A short presentation
† A usable summary of the traditional rules
† A bonus Quest Zero: to teach the basics of the game
† Three beginners Quests, to start a new game
† A little rule about Fear of the Undead